

Thomas Jefferson to William C. C. Claiborne, October 29, 1808, from The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.

TO THE GOVERNOR OF LOUISIANA J. MSS. (WILLIAM CHARLES COLE CLAIBORNE.)

Washington, Oct. 29, 08.

Sir, —I send the enclosed letter under the benefit of your cover, & open, because I wish you to know it's contents. I thought the person to whom it is addressed a very good man when here,—he is certainly a very learned and able one. I thought him peculiarly qualified to be useful with you. But in the present state of my information, I can say no more than I have to him. When you shall have read the letter, be so good as to stick a wafer in it, & not let it be delivered till it is dry, that he may not know that any one but himself sees it. The Spanish paper you enclosed me is an atrocious one. I see it has been republished in Havanna. The truth is that the patriots of Spain have no warmer friends than the administration of the U S, but it is our duty to say nothing & to do nothing for or against either. If they succeed, we shall be well satisfied to see Cuba & Mexico remain in their present dependence; but very unwilling to see them in that of either France or England, politically or commercially. We consider their interests & ours as the same, and that the object of both must be to exclude all European influence from this hemisphere. We wish to avoid the necessity of going to war, till our revenue shall be entirely liberated from debt. Then it will suffice for war, without creating new debt or taxes. These are sentiments which I would wish you to express to any proper characters of either of these two countries, and

Library of Congress

particularly that we have nothing more at heart than their friendship. I salute you with great esteem & respect.